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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relative effects of different modes of supervisory feedback on the development of beginning teacher candidates' refocusing behaviors. Thirty-nine secondary teacher candidates served as subjects. They were enrolled in two sections of the course taught by the same instructor and were assigned randomly to four experimental groups. All the subjects engaged in a micro-teach-reteach cycle over a 2-week period, and all lessons were audiotaped. After the first lesson, one group received no feedback--they were not permitted to listen to their tapes or to consult their instructor. The second group listened to their tapes but received no other feedback. The third group listened to their tapes using a listening guide designed to assist them in identifying their use of refocusing behaviors. The fourth group listened to their tapes using the listening guides and also had a non-directive conference with their instructor. Results indicated that listening to their tapes by the candidates, with or without a listening guide, seems to yield little change in subsequent teaching behavior. There was some empirical support for combining personal non-directive supervision with other types of feedback. It was also suggested that laboratory teaching will probably be more expensive to initiate and maintain than conventional programs. (MBM)

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EFFECTS OF DIFFERENT TYPES OF SUPERVISORY FEEDBACK ON TEACHER CANDIDATES' DEVELOPMENT OF REFOCUSING BEHAVIORS[1]

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Effects of Different Types of Supervisory Feedback on Teacher Candidates' Development of Refocusing Behaviors

"To help teachers to develop greater competence in teaching" (Macdonald, 1965) is an avowed purpose of supervision. Additional purposes, while incorporating attention to various concerns, are related directly to the improvement of teachers' performance (e.g., Harris, 1963). While such statements of central intent are widely accepted, little research evidence is available to indicate the effectiveness of supervision. Empirical studies are particularly lacking which yield evidence of the relative effectiveness of different types of supervisory practices.

Several reasons may help explain the dearth of research in this area. Securing a satisfactory environment in which the

research might take place is an obvious necessity and one difficult to develop in the usual structure of school practice. Also, specification of the teacher behaviors (performances) toward which the supervision is directed has been characterized by less than adequate rigor. Another important element, too frequently absent in research in this field, is the adequate logical differentiation between different supervisory practices. Rather than depending on research designed for the naturalistic context of schools, use of a teaching laboratory seems to be one means by which empirical studies of supervision may be enhanced.

The Teaching Laboratory (TL) at The University of Texas at Austin, based on microteaching principles, is an integral component of the introductory course in secondary school teaching. In the TL context, candidates teach short lessons (5-8 minutes) to small groups of peers. Their verbal behaviors are audio tape-recorded and the tapes may be played and analyzed in a nearby listening facility. Research indicates the general power of the TL to dramatically influence changes in teaching behaviors (Davis and Smoot, 1969). Yet, the effects of different types of supervisory feedback on these changes has not been studied to date.

In early studies on micorteaching Allen and Fortune (1965) noted that the procedure provides a convenient vehicle for the use of immediate student feedback and opportunity for intensive

supervision in teacher training. These researchers, using a subjective evaluation instrument, found significant differences in ratings between groups subjected to different procedures in microteaching and between pre and post ratings of trainees. Berliner (1969), reviewing a number of microteaching studies, reports the generally consistent evidence of supervisory effects during video-feedback, particularly when that supervision has concentrated on cue reinforcement and discrimination. On the other hand, Borg (1969) has employed video-feedback without live supervision with positive results. Clearly, additional evidence is needed.

The purpose of the present study was to investigate the relative effects of different modes of supervisory feedback on development of beginning teacher candidates' refocusing behaviors. It is one study in a continuing program of research and development activities related to examination and expansion of laboratory teaching.

Procedure

Thirty-nine secondary teacher candidates, mostly juniors and seniors, in an introductory course in teaching served as subjects in this experiment. They were enrolled in two sections of the course taught by the same instructor. Ss were assigned randomly to one of four experimental groups.

In all groups, Ss engaged in a TL teach-reteach cycle over a two-week period. During that week following the initial TL lesson (teach), Ss received differential supervisory feedback; then they taught the reteach lesson. Both lessons were audio taped. All Ss were instructed about refocusing behaviors by a written TL manual, instructor demonstration, and class discussion. All were encouraged to improve their reteach lesson by the inclusion of more refocusing behaviors.

Refocusing behaviors were defined as those changes in a teacher's lesson which had the purpose of gaining, maintaining, and/or increasing pupil attention. Eight types of refocusing behaviors were identified (Gregory, 1968) and discussed in the TL manual (TL Staff, 1968).

The types of supervisory feedback assigned to the four experimental groups are described below. Group I Ss received no feedback. They were not permitted to listen to their tapes nor were they allowed to personally consult their supervisor (instructor) about their TL lesson. Group II Ss listened to the

audio tape recording of their lesson but without a specific listening guide for the refocusing task. They also did not consult with their supervisor. Ss in Group III listened to their tapes using a listening guide specially designed to assist candidates in identification of their use of refocusing behaviors. Group IV Ss listened to their tape using the listening guide. They also had a conference with their instructor who employed generally non-directive supervisory techniques. In this conference, specific attention was not given to cue reinforcement and discrimination.

Criterion data for the TL lesson were yielded by four instruments. Ss rated themselves on a graphic rating scale as a measure of self-evaluation. Peer pupils rated the TL lessons using a standard TL rating guide. An observer listened to all Ss' tapes and counted the refocusing behaviors in each lesson. Also, the observer rated each lesson using the same graphic scale employed in Ss' self-evaluations.

Results and Discussion

Table 1 presents the means of the four criterion scores for both the teach and reteach lessons. Analysis of covariance procedures revealed non-significant differences between groups for self evaluation ($F = 1.38$), peer pupil rating ($F = 1.77$), and observer rating ($F = .83$). A significant difference ($F = 2.33$) between groups for the number of refocusing behaviors counted was observed. This result, along with reference to Table 1, indicates that Group IV Ss seemed to profit from listening to their tapes with a guide and having a personal supervisory conference.

The need for replication and extension of the study is obvious. Nevertheless, this research provides some empirical support for coupling personal non-directive supervision with other types of feedback about teaching performances to beginning teacher candidates. The role of the supervisor -- that is, the kinds of actions he takes in order to "help" the beginning teacher candidate -- merits intensive examination. What does a supervisor do in a non-directive manner? Does he implicitly or explicitly reinforce desired behaviors? Does he aid the candidate in discriminating between behaviors being focused on in the particular task under study and if so, how? Even with more information needed, personal, live, "non-directed" supervision seemed beneficial.

Additionally suggested is that teacher candidates' listening to their tapes, with or without a listening guide, probably yields

little change in subsequent teaching behavior. At least, these beginning teacher candidates did not profit from listening to the audio tape-recording only, whether or not they used a listening guide to focus their observation. Since these beginning candidates were not familiar with the teaching task of refocusing, a guide to their listening was believed to be helpful. Using it, they could differentiate relevant behaviors and have a rather accurate notion of their performance. The results do not sustain this assumption. Perhaps with more training and experience, and with the use of video tape-recording, beginning candidates' performances might be enhanced by such supervisory modes. Presently, however, the available evidence does not support the value of feedback in the absence of a personal supervisor. This finding underscores the possibility that laboratory teaching likely will be more expensive to initiate and maintain than conventional programs. Some advocates of this procedure may have raised hopes of employing new technology (video cameras and recorders) as a means of increasing effectiveness of program without raising expenditures. The evidence surely seems not to support such an idea.

Further, the study points up the usefulness of the Teaching Laboratory as a means for experimentation in supervision of teaching. Research on supervisory feedback in the TL context should profit from the scaled down environment and restricted task elements.

Table 1

Means Scores on Four Criterion Measures

Group	Self-Evaluation		Peer Pupil Rating		Number of Refocusing Behaviors		Observer Ratings	
	Teach	Reteach	Teach	Reteach	Teach	Reteach	Teach	Reteach
I (N = 9)	36.8	40.3	2.28	2.16	19.4	22.5	40.4	41.4
II (N = 10)	30.0	33.9	2.74	2.30	21.6	21.2	37.2	37.6
III (N = 10)	35.1	37.5	2.43	2.61	20.2	22.5	35.9	38.4
IV (N = 10)	33.5	36.8	2.27	2.19	20.8	27.5	42.2	41.7

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